

## Aberystwyth University

### *Developing Digital Tusche Washes for Photoplate Lithography*

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# Printmaking

ARTISTS' PRINTS, BOOKS AND MULTIPLES

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TODAY

## IN FOCUS

WAYNE THIEBAUD  
VLADIMIR MARTYNOV  
RICHARD BLACK  
JENNY WIENER

NEWS | REVIEWS | PRACTICAL | TECHNICAL | EXHIBITIONS | OPPORTUNITIES



# Printmaker's Diary

It takes a long haul flight of at least 23 hours, propped up between two snoring strangers, to make you appreciate just how big our home planet really is. I mean, I used to think that the train journey from Aberystwyth to London was a bit of a trek – but that's just peanuts compared to going Down Under. This was my first trip across the Line of Neptune to far off antipodean shores and, naturally, I was expecting to see water drain down the plughole the 'wrong' way – but not to see the moon upside down. My third *Impact* conference (three out of the seven) was the excuse I needed to spend an exciting three weeks in Sydney and Melbourne. Next time it will have to be at least three months. Australia may be a helluva long way for us Pommies but its apparent isolation from the global recession and close proximity to South East Asia seems to be driving a tremendous sense of prosperity, exuberance and energy that is well worth experiencing. It was like being back in Britain in the 1990s.

*Impact7 Intersections and Counterpoints* was this year hosted by Monash University in the elegant city of Melbourne. These biannual conference events have become Olympian in scale and Herculean effort is required to organize such a manifestly diverse programme of lectures, demonstrations and exhibitions. This year's conference, which occurred during the last four days of September, was no exception. It included over 140 papers, 42 exhibitions, folio and poster presentations, plus a four-day product fair and workshop demonstrations. Organized in association with The Print Council of Australia and the Gordon Darling Foundation, *Intersections and Counterpoints* was an opportunity to explore the multiple identity of printmaking within the context of multimedia, cross-disciplinary practice and international multiculturalism. An eclectic mix and juxtaposition of talks and presentations provided a stimulating atmosphere of exchange and debate. On show: a wonderful cross-section of print media from woodcut to inkjet. Above all it was an opportunity to meet people and swap those business cards...

## Power to Parr

Walking around the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, I came across the impressive prints and sculpture of Australian performance and multimedia artist Mike Parr. At *Impact*, it was a pleasure then to listen to master printer John Loan talk about his close working relationship with Parr – a collaboration that has endured since the first prints were pulled at Viridian Press in 1987. As a performance artist, Parr shocked Australians with *Un-Australian and Aussie Aussie Aussie, Oi! Oi! Oi!* (2003), both hard-hitting attacks on Australia's then immigration policy and involved the artist sewing his lips and eyes together whilst on stage.

During the 24 years that he has known and worked with Loan, *The Self Portrait Project* has become the focus for drawing, painting, film,



## WINTER 2011

### Paul Croft RE's Globetrotting Down Under

sculpture and performance and, in printmaking, has accounted for at least 1,000, possibly 2,000 plates and prints. Parr's approach to copper plate and plywood is as aggressive and disturbing as the self harm and laceration in his performance. Drypoint is achieved with a series of power tools, drills, angle grinders and sanders. Scale is usually monumental as his drawing spreads across the many plates that Loan has prepared and hammered to the wall. Printmaking as performance, copper as mirror – the resistance of needle on metal somehow excavating the face from within – have been revelatory for Parr. In *100 Breaths* (2003) the artist is seen systematically drawing each of 100 proofs to his mouth, with every intake of breath, – an apt and logical extension of his practice.

## Month of Print

Coinciding with *Impact*, the Print Council of Australia had organized the *Month of Print* – an impressive fringe event of workshop demonstrations, talks, masterclasses, and exhibitions co-ordinated across galleries and studios in the greater Melbourne area. Starting at the futuristic National Gallery of Victoria at Federation Square, which has the most impressive collection of contemporary western desert painting, I wound my way through Fitzroy, Melbourne's cultural heart. Here, there was printmaking in abundance. At the Printmaker Gallery, *The Thirty-Eight Show* included a print for each year

the gallery has been in existence since 1974. Down the road the Australian Print Workshop was showing the work of 41 artists who have each received a scholarship from APW Collie Print Trust for emerging Victorian artists. Nearby at Port Jackson Press there was a fascinating collaboration between Milan Milojevic and Jennifer Marshall combining etching and digital printing. At an exhibition of *Contemporary Printmaking* at the James Makin Gallery at the end of the street, I was very taken with the experimental and collaborative approach of two Tasmanian printmakers: Madeleine and Nicholas Goodwolf. At the Australian Gallery in Smith Street, an elegant show of stainless steel mesh sculptures and etchings by Scottish artist David Begbie rounded off an entertaining afternoon.

## Contemporary Collaborations

Arguably, some of the most impressive contemporary printmaking in Australia is currently emanating from the far west and north of the continent. In Sydney, I stumbled across a gallery exhibiting the work of Torres Strait Islander artists Dennis Nona and Alick Tipoti, both responsible for pioneering printmaking in the region during the 1990s. At Monash, a delightful exhibition from Badu Arts Centre included beautiful black and white linocuts of patterned fish and village scenes by Tipoti and several other younger emerging artists.

Tamarind trained master printer Dian Darmansjah, who set up Firebox Print Studio in Cooran, Queensland, in 2006, talked about his recent collaborations in the outback. Driving with his portable studio fully equipped for etching, he has been working with the Papunya Tula artists located in Kintore and Kiwirrkura in western Australia. When conducting these workshops, sometimes he is fortunate to have an enclosed space in which to set up the studio but, more often, plates are etched in baths out in the open air. The method of viscosity etching that he uses with these artists is ideal, as dots are stopped out and the deep etching allows for multi-colour printing. At *Impact*, it was suggested that these prints represent a significant advance in contemporary Australian art and, ideally, should be collected, catalogued and archived for the nation.

## Closing the Circle

Finally, thanks to Richard Harding at the Faculty Gallery, RMIT, it was a pleasant surprise to see the portfolio, *International Circle of Print*, organized and curated by Melanie Yazzi. Consisting of 52 prints by artists worldwide, this special portfolio surely encapsulates the spirit of printmaking, of collaboration and of *Impact* – now firmly established as the leading international brand in the world of print.

## Image

*Islandia Frieze 2 #IV* by Milan Milojevic  
Digital print & etching, 480 x 330 mm  
Image courtesy of Port Jackson Press, Australia